

**Architectural and Archaeological Impact Assessment for the property
known as The Secret Garden, on the Remainder of portion 1 of the Farm
Cluny Park no 14809, Msunduzi Municipality**



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Appendix 1: The curriculum vitae of Debbie Whelan of Archaic Consulting

1. Introduction

Debbie Whelan from Archaic Consulting was contacted by Gavin Whitelaw from the Natal Museum with respect to assessing the property currently known as 'The Secret Garden', located on the Remainder of Portion 1 of the Farm Cluny Park no 14809, situated behind Bisley Reserve Hill in Pietermaritzburg. The affected area in question is around 3ha with the surrounding land owned by the client being fenced and run with game. Access roads are on existing paths.

The client requested an Architectural/Historical Impact Assessment for his property, with respect to submitting a DFA application. As the specific property under discussion was occupied by an old farmhouse, it was felt that the architectural component formed the primary report, with an archaeological report dealing with the same portion, and submitting recommendations with respect to the adjoining properties also owned by the client.

2. Executive Summary

- *The proximity to Pietermaritzburg and the railway line would have made this farming area desirable land as far as accessibility to markets in the past. The remains of structures which possibly date to the first settlement are therefore valuable and should be treated with sensitivity. The fragmentation of the parent farm in 1856 gives a possible date as to the construction of the shale buildings on the site, although association with any particular practice, person or event has not been revealed and is not within the scope of this brief.*
- *Although the main house is over 60 years old, there is little architectural, social, technical, or historical merit. However, the structure is over 60 years old, and any applications for its alteration or demolition in the future should be made through the correct processes. It is recommended that the alterations stand as is, and that the Heritage legislation be applied and enforced with any further work.*
- *That the ruin has been interpreted by the owners of the property in an appropriate manner in that it continues to have life. The treatment of the ruin should be acceptable in its current state.*
- *The treatment of the construction of the new chapel is historicist but within a themed context. It is not inappropriate in terms of scale nor material, and, in the absence of the knowledge of the nature of the prior structure, should be acceptable as it stands.*
- *A general premise with respect to Outbuilding no 1 should be adopted. Because of its incremental construction, there are portions which are over the age of 60 years, and it is strongly suggested that Amafa be contacted in the event of any alteration, demolition or addition to this structure. It reads as an utilitarian agricultural structure and it is the author's understanding that this is the aesthetic ethos that the owner wants to retain. Major alterations will thus alter the feeling of the building totally.*
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- *The structure comprising Outbuilding no 4 is of little value. However, the wall around it are of interest from an historical and technical point of view, and their management should include support and direction from Amafa.*

3. Statement of Expertise and Methodology

Debbie Whelan has training and experience in the architectural field, particularly with respect to historic structures. Gavin Whitelaw is Head of Archaeology at the Natal Museum. The Curriculum Vitae of Debbie Whelan of Archaic Consulting forms Appendix 1 of this document.

Gavin Whitelaw and Debbie Whelan visited the site on 5 December 2008. The different features and clients intentions were pointed out, and questions in this regard fielded. Recourse was made to the 1937 aerial photograph (117B_ 020_05526) to establish, if possible, the various forms of the house and the use of the land.

The stated intention of the client is to consolidate the current operation, which is a wedding and conference venue, to include in the future, some staff housing and some overnight accommodation for guests. Development is not intended to occur on any of the adjoining plots, but rather close to the house and the old outbuildings.

Assessments of each of the structures were made, and the potential sites for development of the abovementioned accommodation pointed out. The archaeology component assessed the landscape, currently under lush grass, for potential sites¹.

There is building and landscaping work which has been carried out on the property in recent years which has not gone through the Amafa application process through mishap, and it is suggested that this is a separate, retrospective application rather than one which is affected by or affects the DFA application process.

4. Brief history of site

The original farm was called *Lamonts Vale* 1210 which originally consisted of 2881 acres and was part of the original Dutch farm *Nooitgedacht*. *Lamonts Vale* was an original grant in 1852 to the Estate of the Late Alexander Lamont, and then in 1856 transferred into the names HM and J McIntosh, George and William Corlett and William Robertson. The first known as Almond Bank was registered in 1856 consisting of 570 acres 'sold' by the consortium and registered in William Robertson's name. Also, in 1856, third shares in 1000 acres lots were registered with the balance holders. In 1856, *Mount Rula* (on this the land register is indistinct) consisting of 703 acres was registered to the Corlett Brothers, and *Cluny Park* of 607 acres to the McIntosh brothers from the Corlett brothers. *Sub B of Almond Bank* was transferred into William Robertson's name.

Given the creation of the original Lot *Cluny Park* in 1856, it is very likely that the shale structures, characteristic of the settler vernacular in the area and in the absence of large trees, date back to the fragmentation of the main farm to form the three subdivisions. Thus, the structural material that we are discussing with respect to the walling and the ruined buildings dates to the middle of the nineteenth century.

In addition, there was occupation by a successive owner, Komen, described in the following archival information: Mr. C Komen, "Cluny Park" Fox Hill: Permission to move seventeen head of cattle from "Cluny Park" Umgeni Division to the farm "Zeekoehoek" New Hanover Division. (PVS 166 3119/1911:1911) Transhumance between farms was a commonly practiced technique to optimize grazing. cursory searches were done under the parent farm names and the names of the other subdivisions as well as the owners, but nothing has come to light.

Summary: The proximity to Pietermaritzburg and the railway line would have made this farming area desirable land as far as accessibility to markets in the past. The remains of structures which possibly date to the first settlement are therefore valuable and should be treated with sensitivity. The fragmentation of the parent farm in 1856 gives a possible date as to the construction of the shale buildings on the site, although association with any particular practice, person or event has not been revealed and is not within the scope of this brief.

¹ It must be borne in mind that these farms, and particularly in the proximity of the farmsteads, have been much disturbed for decades, particularly as this property once functioned as a dairy.

5. Assessment of structures

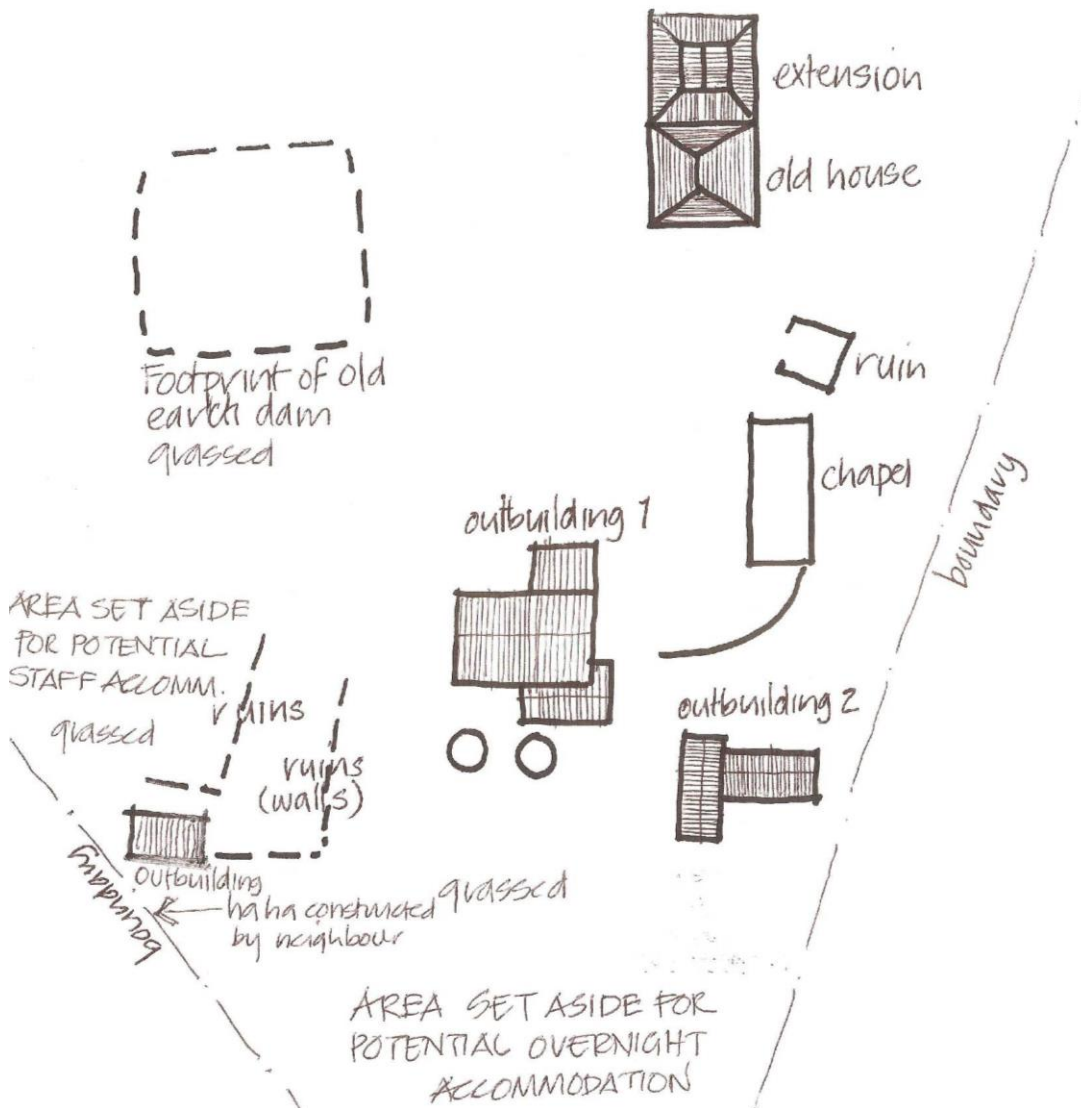


Fig: sketch of layout of site

5.1 Main House

The main house is of formal construction under Marseilles tiles. Windows are painted timber casement. It has had a recent extension of a similar construction but roofed with IBR. The junction has been negotiated with a valley gutter, thus the two structures read concurrently but also separately. This is the space that is used as the wedding and conference venue, and looks out across the lawns down to the P120 road between Bisley and Manderston. The house form is visible on the 1937 aerials, and from elements of the construction it is suspected that it was built a little before this, although the remains of other structures on the site point to much earlier occupation. In addition, it is possible that elements such as Tuscan Columns, could have been added in the second decade of last century onto an older building. Much of what could be diagnostic material is generic.

However, the mere situation of the buildings of the property on the 1937 aerial subjects them to provincial Heritage Legislation, and due application to Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali for alteration, demolition or addition.

The main house has little merit except that it is an old structure. Accretions have taken place over the years, such as tiling and altered skirtings, and there is little left which shows the original character of what was more than likely a very simple and utilitarian structure.

Comment on alterations:

The alterations which have been carried out both internally (minor) which involve the removal of sanitary ware and the construction of bathrooms, and externally (major) which include the addition of a large room to the east of the house and a small extension to the rear which has become storage space, are simple, of like material and new windows are of varnished meranti rather than painted timber. Separation between the structures is achieved with a wide valley gutter, which also assists in the reading of the different pitches.

The relation of the building is one of building to landscape, and one which exists *sans* other major structures. The original intended used would be mainly agricultural, and as such distant from urban context. The building's scale may have changed, but the agricultural context remains.



Fig: the main house from the north



Fig: Showing the junction of the two buildings



Fig: Showing the relative scales of the old building (to the rear) and the new building (to the front)



Fig: rear showing added rear 'afdak' with plastered wall



Fig: showing main house and addition to the left

Statement of Significance:

Main House	local	regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low

Recommendations

Although the main house is over 60 years old, there is little architectural, social, technical, or historical merit. However, the structure is over 60 years old, and any applications for its alteration or demolition in the future should be made through the correct processes. It is

recommended that the alterations stand as is, and that the Heritage legislation be applied and enforced with any further work.

5.2 Ruin

The 'ruin' is the remains of an old and collapsed shale construction which has been stabilized and retained, and landscaped with the purpose of presenting an appropriately romantic space for wedding photographs.



Fig: Showing 'ruin' as the wedding photograph backdrop

Comments on the alterations:

The structure has been stabilized and forms a coherent part of the pastoral landscape, with the backdrop of the building next to it which is being reformed as a chapel. The ruin continues to have life even though it no longer functions as a formal building. It is of picturesque rather than architectural value.

Statement of Significance:

ruin	local	regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low

Recommendations:

That the ruin has been interpreted by the owners of the property in an appropriate manner in that it continues to have life. The treatment of the ruin should be acceptable in its current state.

5.3 Chapel

The owner maintains that the chapel is being constructed on the footprint of a previous structure, and that the materials, largely shale, from this dilapidated structure, as well as from other collapsed walls on the site, have been incorporated into the new building. The chapel site abuts the picturesque ruin, and is being built with modern materials such as 'Brickforce' and concrete to supplement the found materials.

In the words of the client; 'Regarding the 'structure' that previously stood on the chapel footprint, it was as I described it to you. The rusty roofed portion had mostly collapsed and the dry shale wall had either fallen over or was in the process of doing so. It was in far worse shape than the shale structure next door that we made into a garden or the rusty-roof building up near the staff accommodation. The galvanised roof section was a breeze-block extension that had been used as accommodation but was also abandoned and in very poor shape. [Had I known about Amafa etc, I would obviously taken pictures etc but unfortunately I don't have any]. The chapel now covers most of the same footprint (it's slightly shorter in length) and all the shale from the old structure was used to make the chapel.'



Fig: showing Chapel in process of construction from north



Fig; Chapel under construction



Fig: chapel from south west

Statement of Significance

Chapel	local	regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low

As the chapel is essentially a new build out of found material from the site, it is difficult to classify in terms of what it replaced. Certainly the author has to take the statement of the owner at face value in this regard, and assume that the shale structure which it is replacing was in fact dilapidated and uninhabitable, as many of the older buildings on the site were, being serviceable and utilitarian in nature. Giving what can be problematic materials to recycle a new lease on life and preserving a certain pastoral topophilia must be noted. The final scale of the building is indicated by the height of the gable ends and does not appear at this stage to be overwhelming. The intention of the owner is to roof with corrugated sheeting rather than IBR.

Recommendations:

The treatment of the construction of the new chapel is historicist but within a themed context. It is not inappropriate in terms of scale nor material, and, in the absence of the knowledge of the nature of the prior structure, should be acceptable as it stands.

5.4 Outbuilding 1

This is an agricultural structure which once housed stock, and is flanked to the west by two silos. The large roof structure functioned as a dairy for many years but is currently used for the storage of implements, building supplies and tools. It is an incremental utilitarian building, of mixed construction under corrugated sheeting. Part of it is currently used for staff accommodation and storage.



Fig: Old dairy/ outbuilding 1 showing enclosed area housing staff with the sheds behind.



Fig: Outbuilding 1 from the south side of the site showing brick silos



Fig: view across site showing ruin (left) chapel (centre) and outbuilding 1 (right)



Fig: view from north west showing entrance doors to the old dairy shed

Statement of Significance

Outbuilding 1	local	regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low

Summary: A general premise with respect to Outbuilding no 1 should be adopted. Because of its incremental construction, there are portions which are over the age of 60 years, and it is strongly suggested that Amafa be contacted in the event of any alteration, demolition or addition to this structure. It reads as an utilitarian agricultural structure and it is the author's understanding that this is the aesthetic ethos that the owner wants to retain. Major alterations will thus alter the feeling of the building totally.

5.5 Outbuilding no 2

This consists of a series of buildings informally linked together. The most notable is the corner building which is a simple veranda building of shale construction under a corrugated sheeting roof. (in fig below this is situated in the centre) This is currently unused and according to the owner 'It took a hammering with the November storms, we will just have to see if it gets closer to collapse.' Adjoining it (to the left in the fig below), is a reasonably nondescript but of-age plastered and painted building under corrugated sheeting which is also currently used as staff accommodation.



Fig: Showing outbuilding 2 with old shale building in the centre.



Fig: showing outbuilding 2 showing mixed shale and brick wall



Fig: outbuilding no 2 shale veranda building



Fig: Showing outbuilding no 1 with the silos in relation to outbuilding no 2 to the right

Statement of Significance

Outbuilding 2	local	regional	National	International
Architectural	Medium	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	medium	low	low	low
Historical	medium	low	low	low

Given that standing structures of this construction and age are rare, the buildings that comprise

Summary: The connected structures that comprise Outbuilding 2 display good examples of settler vernacular. Given the possible connection with the shale structure and the McIntosh settlement, it is strongly recommended that Amafa be involved in any plans to repair, alter, add to or demolish these structures.

5.6 Outbuilding 3

This consists of a concrete block building with a corrugated sheeting roof, in a state of disrepair. It has no aesthetic value, and is not of any architectural, historical, technical, scientific nor social value. However, more importantly is the series of shale walls which run in its proximity, and recourse should be made to Amafa for any addition, alteration or demolition of these structures.



Fig: Showing outbuilding no 4 to the left of the copse



Fig: Showing outbuilding no 4 with some of the old walling

Statement of Significance

Outbuilding 3	local	regional	National	International
Architectural	low	low	low	low
Social	low	low	low	low
Scientific	low	low	low	low
Technical	low	low	low	low
Historical	low	low	low	low

Summary; the structure comprising Outbuilding no 4 is of little value. However, the wall around it are of interest from an historical and technical point of view, and their management should include support and direction from Amafa.

6. Archaeological assessment of the development at 'Secret Garden' wedding venue

I visited the 'Secret Garden' wedding venue (Remainder of Portion 1 of the farm Cluny Park No. 14809; S29° 41' 15" E30° 23' 57") on 5 December 2008 at the invitation of Mr J. Stockley, to evaluate the possible impact of the development on the archaeological environment. The affected area is situated near Pietermaritzburg on the P120 Manderston/Bisley road. It consists of a park-like garden in the vicinity of the main house, the partially constructed chapel, the staff quarters, and the disused farmstead structures.

Archaeological records at the Natal Museum indicate that a wide range of archaeological materials from Early Stone Age to the Late Iron Age could occur in the affected area. The ground surface is well-grassed, however, and ground visibility is nil. The assessment was therefore restricted to above-ground features. None was observed.

The ground surface has been much disturbed in the past by levelling, dam building and the erection of farm buildings. The likelihood of anything archaeologically significant occurring in the affected area is therefore low.

I do not believe that any additional archaeological mitigation is necessary at this stage. I recommend, however, that archaeological assessment should precede any additional developments beyond the existing structures and the current car park. Further, any construction and development activities resulting in the discovery of archaeological material must be suspended immediately, pending evaluation by a competent archaeologist.



Fig: main house in distance from area intended to build staff houses- once planning and excavation has begun, it is strongly recommended that a qualified archaeologist be consulted and be readily available with reference to any excavated material, archaeological, industrial or historical, which emerges.

**Gavin Whitelaw
Natal Museum
22 December 2008**